

Ezras Pulpit.

10 F

OR,

**A Sermon lately Preached
in Southwarke, before a Worship-
full Assembly.**

Very necessary for these times.

BY

WILLIAM FREAKER,
Minister.

Luke 7. 4, 5. verses.

*And when they came to Iesus, they be-
sought him instantly, saying, that he was
worthy for whom he should doe this:*


*For, he loveth our nation, and hath built
us a Synagogue.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Tho. Harper* for *Richard Harper*,
and are to be sold at his shop at the Bible
and Harp in Smithfield, 1639.



To the right Worshipfull, Sir
Nicholas Rainton, Knight, President,
the Worshipfull *Martin Bond*, Esquire,
Treasurer, with the Governours of
the Hospitall of little S *Bartholomewes*,
W. F. wisheth that Grace and
Peace may be multiplied.

 Hat I studied for your pri-
vate Chappell, and there
delivered before some of
you, on Tuesday the 19. of
Iune, last past, I have been
importuned to make publick, as for a com-
mon good. If it be good, then quò com-
munius, eò melius, the more publicke it
becommeth, the more good it may doe. I
wist well in the study and delivery of it
to as many as desire the prosperity of our
royall foundation. In the publishing of it,
I would gladly have it conceived that my
zeale is the same for the publicke wel-
fare. If that memorable act of your piety,
A 2 which

which occasioned this Sermon, shall provoke some well minded ones to imitate your example elsewhere, or incite the able handed to promote such charitable undertakings for the comfort of so many sick and distressed soules daily by your care refreshed: it may redound much to Gods glory, your owne comforts, and the happinesse of those whom God shall move hereby to tread in your steps. If no such thing succeed, yet it shall be your honour to have lighted up the candle of so good an example for the times to come: as it is, and shall be, for you all, that God may long continue to our Hospitall, your pious care for the happy and orderly government thereof, the daily prayer of

Your Hospitaler,

William Freake.

From my Study in your Hospitall
the 12 day of Feb. 1639.



Ezras Pulpit.

Neh. 8. 4,5,6,7,8.verses.

And Ezra the Scribe stood upon a Pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose, &c. to the end of the 8. verse.



Beloved: I finde it to be the observation of a Father, that the two Cherubins, which by Gods appointment were to be placed at the two ends of the *Mercy-seat*, *Exod. 25.18.* as they should be of beaten gold, so they should bee so placed, that they might face each other: as an instruction for all Ministers and Preachers of the Word and Gospell, saith the learned *Zanche*, to take this care and course, that as their Doctrine should be purely the word of God, and not their owne, so they should be ever studious to make their Texts to suit with the occasions of their Sermons,

facing

facing each other, as the Cherubins over the Mercy-seat, that so being a word in due season, they may be like Apples of gold in pictures of silver, *Proverbs* 25. 11. And this I confesse, as it is my duty, so it hath beene my study in the preparation of my meditations for this place and occasion, to reconcile the text of Scripture, which (by Gods blessing) I have made choice of, to the occasion of this day and our present meeting. A worke, which if you please so vouchsafe your favourable attention, will aske us no great labour.

1 Because here is *Ezra* the Scribe, requested and appointed to bring forth the booke of the Law of *Moses*, which God commanded *Israel*, as ye have it in the first verse of this chapter.

2 Because here is a Congregation lawfully assembled: for, all the people had gathered themselves together as one man, in the street that was before the Water-gate, in the first part of the first verse of this chapter. And there was a congregation both of men and women, even as many as could heare with understanding, in the second verse.

3 Because here is *Ezra* the Scribe reading in the booke of the Law, before the

congregation, from the morning, even till mid-day, in the third verse.

4 Because here is the manner of this religious duty, with silence and attention: for, the eares of all the people were attentive to the booke of the Law, as you may reade in the last words of the third verse.

5 Because, here is the place and posture of the Minister. He stands upon a Pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose (as our last translation readees it) or, which they had prepared for the preaching, (as the former translation hath it:) And *Ezra the Scribe stood upon a Pulpit of wood, &c.* So that all things (you see) are fitted for the occasion of our present meeting, except in this one thing there prove a defect, that now there be a want of a learned Scribe to reade unto you. And in this case, I beseech you, give me leave to make my prayer, and I desire your charitable assistance therein. *O Lord God, &c.* and so in a confident assurance of Gods gracious assistance, I prepare to the words of my Text. And *Ezra the Scribe, &c.* And thus have I led your understandings to the words of our Text, which before I enter upon, give mee leave I beseech you, to stoop and gather for you a flower or two that grow in the way to our

Text, by considering the context, and the coherence of these words with the former verses of this chapter.

Wherein I observe thus much.

1 This people was newly returned out of captivity, into which they had been delivered for the great and grievous finnes of that nation in generall, as you may reade in the last chapter of the second Booke of the *Chronicles*, from the 14 verse to the end of the 16. And being now by the mercifull hand of their good God brought backe to their owne land and ruined City, they are setting a new government among themselves by way of reformation, both in their Ecclesiasticall and civill State, being assisted in the one by *Ezra* the Scribe, and in the other by *Nehemiah*, their religious and prudent Governor. Wherin that they may procure directions from heaven, and conceive the fairer hopes of happy successe: they are assembled as one man, into a great and famous street of the City, there by fasting and prayer to call upon God in humiliation of soule; and there *Ezra* the Scribe standeth upon a Pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose, and reades the Law unto them. Doubtlesse, if there had beene this true devotion in them, while their

Temple was standing, and *Ierusalem* in her prosperity, they might have escaped the fiery furnace of the Babilonish captivity. But they have beene cast into it, for the space of seventy yeeres, and are now but newly delivered out of it. And now, ye see, they are become penitent, and wee finde them at their devotion in prayer & fasting, being assembled for that purpose in a publicke street.

1 *Point*, That we may observe, the sweet benefit and comfort of affliction, where it is sanctified to the Patient, and a right use made of it. This people had beene accustomed to finde mercy at the hands of their God, how grievously soever offended with them, so often as they did returne unto him by repentance and humiliation. Their fathers had trusted in him, and were delivered, as the Psalmist truly singeth, *Psal. 22. 4.* and now their children take the same course and prosper.

Use To shew us, that affliction unto a childe of God, is but a refining of him from his dresse, and a trying of him for his future good. According to that remarkable speech of the Lord, by the ministry of his Prophet, *Zachary the 13. chap. the 8 and 9. verses*, where, threatening the Iewish na-

tion with utter destruction by the sword of *Titus Vespasian* the Roman Emperour, he saith, *That in that day it should come to passe, that throughout all the land, two third parts thereof should be cut off and dye. but a third shall remaine therein: and I will bring that third part through the fire (saith God) & I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tryed: and then shall they all call upon my Name, and I will heare them: then I will say, this is my people, and they shall say it is the Lord my God.* And thus was it with this people at this time; they had been in the furnace of affliction, they were humbled before God, and he heard them: hee acknowledged them once more to be his people, and they were in devotion before him, as before the Lord their God. To teach us all what course we should take in this case, when by our finnes wee have brought our selves under the rod of God in what nature soever. Even to seeke God in his holy Ordinances in humility of soule for sinne, who before we call, is ready to answer, and while we pray is ready to heare, *Isaiah 65. 24.* But I insist no longer upon this point, I passe to another.

2 Ob. In the second place therefore be pleased to oblerve with mee, thus much.

This people in their great distresse are compassionated by King *Cyrus*, in the first yeere of his raigne, who, according as *Jeremy* had prophesied, at the full period of seventy yeares, did by publicke Proclamation, loose the bond of their captivity, as you may reade in the two last verses of the last chapter of the second booke of the *Chronicles*: and who according as the Lord had foretold of him by Name, no lesse then one hundred and seventy yeares before hee was borne) performed all Gods pleasure, saying to *Ierusalem*, *thou shalt be built, and to the Temple, thy foundation shall be laid, Isa. 44. verse the last.*

To which end, leaue is given by the King to *Ezra* the Scribe, and to *Nehemiah* their Governour, to direct and assist them in the repaire of their state, and reformation of religion, a great comfort and encouragement to these distressed Iewes.

2 *Point*, Doubtlesse to teach us, by the example of these Iewes, that such as unfainedly turne to God by true repentance, as did these penitent people, shall never want a seasonable and comfortable deliverance, how grievous soever their sinnes have been. yea, rather then fayle in such a case, God will raise up helpe for them, where they

looke not for it. *David* in the dayes of *Saul* found it thus full many a time: *Elias* found it thus in the wildernesse, being fed by Ravens, in the first booke of the *Kings*, the 17. chap. at the 6 verse. *Manasses* in the prilon found it so, when upon his unfained humiliation for sinne, God wrought little lesse then a miracle for him, bringing him backe to *Jerusalem*, restoring him to his kingdom, and changing his iron setters and chaines into a chain of gold and royall scepter, 2 *Chro.* 33. 13.

The people of God have found this true by frequent experience in all ages: and that I may not looke too farre from home, the poore of this house and foundation finde it true: for whose emergent distresses, provision hath beene made, and still is continued by those who never saw their faces, untill that houre wherein their necessities enforce them to seeke unto us: meat and medicine for their hunger and sicknesses, cloaths for their nakednesse, with other necessary comforts. And that they may be instructed to make an happy use of Gods mercies extended unto them in this case, care is had for the spirituall food of their soules, by reading and expounding unto them the blessed word of God; so that, I referre it to your

consideration, whether they have not as just cause ministred unto them to blesse God for his gracious providence over them, for soules and bodies, as had these Iewes to give glory to the God of *Israel*, in their particular: who foreseeing that in time they would cast themselves by their sinnes into the fiery furnace of *Babylons* captivity, had foretold them of a deliverer by the ministry of the Prophet *Isaiah*, an hundred and seventy yeares before hand: and now in his owne time did performe his word punctually by this Monarch of *Persia*, and his favour to his two servants, *Ezra* the Scribe, and *Nehemiah* the Governour. And now as upon these grounds we finde them renewed, and have learned somewhat from thence,

3 *Obser.* So we may observe in the third place, that upon their returne, they make provision for the publike exercise of true religion, as without which, their State could have no firme or assured foundation. Therefore it is said in the first verse of this chapter, that all the people assembled themselves together, and spoke to *Ezra* the Scribe, that hee would bring the Booke of the law of *Moses*, which he had commanded *Israel*. And *Ezra* the Scribe brought forth

forth the booke of the law before the congregation both of men and women, *ver. 2.* And if any would be satisfied who this *Ezra* was, let him read *Ezra 7. 6.* and he shall find that this *Ezra* came up from *Babel*, and was a Scribe prompt in the law of *Moses*, which the Lord God of *Israel* had given: a man to whom the king had granted all his request, and to whose sole direction this people had referred themselves for the establishment of religion & the worship of God among them. From whence we may observe thus much.

3. *Point.* That the publicke exercise of religion, and the establishment thereof is the firmest ground wherupon the peace and happy government of any State can possibly be built. The very heathens themselves knew this: And therefore so soone as *Romulus* the first builder of *Rome*, had by force and armes layd a foundation of that city, next after him succeeded *Numa Pompilius*, who by an heathenish kind of religion brought that rude and barbarous people into some order, *ut quod vi et injuriâ occupaverat imperium, religione ac iustitiâ gubernaret.* sayth their owne historian: that the commād which they had obtained by force and armes to the wrong of others, they might

might establish and administer by a seeming practise of religion as in their owne right. The devill who was the founder of that M^oarchy could reach them thus much: haveing observed some what doubtlesse from the practise of God himselfe, whole Age he hath ever affected to be in imitation: because when the Lord had chosen to himselfe a people of his owne, and had brought them out of *Egypt*, he established their government under *Moses* and *Aaron*: not onely under *Moses*, as their civill Magistrate to rule them by his love, but also under *Aaron*, as their high Priest by God established to keepe them in awe by religion. Feare God and honour the King, sayth Saint *Peter*, 1. *Pet.* 2. 17. As if the honour due to the king could never be given him in that State or kingdome where the feare of God is not taught by a publicke exercise of religion. Wee finde that these Jewes here are sensible of it, in that upon their returne from captivity, in their entrance to the reestablishment of their former government, they have recourse to *Ezra* the scribe, as the only man in those times able to instruct them in that forme of religion, without which their civill estate could never be able to subsist. To which
onely

only end *Ezra* purposing to instruct the people as from Gods mouth, is here found in my text standing upon a pulpit of wood prepared for the preaching.

4 *Obs:* But principally we may observe it in this their solemnity for the establishment of religion, and in this particular: that as there stood at *Ezras* right hand *Mattithia*, and *Shemai*, *Anania*, and *Urijah*, *Hilkiah*, and *Maasejah*. *Qui quidem erant seniores è levitico genere omnes*, sayth *Tremelius* upon this place, elders, all of them of the tribe of *Levi*; so there stood at his left hand, as ready to assist him, *Pedaiah*, and *Misbael*, *Malchia*, and *Hasbun*, *Hasbhadona*, *Zacharia*, and *Mesbullan*, most probably the cheife of their Nobility and Gentry: that their religion and civill estate might ioyn hand in hand to establish peace by a religious government, and true religion by peace. And surely concerning that state whatsoever, wherein there is this sweet union betweene the civill & ecclesiastical government founded vpon the sacred and revealed will of God, I may say truly as doth the Psalmist, *Psal. 144. the last verse.* *Happy are the people that be in such a case: yea, blessed are the people that have the Lord for their God.* Disunion, and discord in
opinions

opinions or practise, seldome produceth any good in any society of men whatsoever: but to a settled Church it is ever troublesome and dangerous: in which regard it hath ever beene the care and study of all good men, who unfainedly desire the publicke good and prosperity of *Sion*, to advance and improve all good meanes and motions conducing to the establishment of this harmonious union, and accord on both sides betwixt the civill and ecclesiasticall government: yea, in all publicke societies and companies, the more prudent and discreet part thereof is ever studious of publicke peace; as are these Jewes here in the beginning of their reformation; who to that purpose joyne the Church and State hand in hand, the Clergy and the Laity: not separating them by factious and partiality, as some in these dayes, or alienating their affections from each other, upon petty differences, but by a mutuall conjunction of the Clergy with the Nobility, endeavouring as with one consent, the welfare of the publicke. In whose proceedings in this case, this is furthermore worthy your observation.

5 Ob, That in their establishment of Gods

B

pub-

publick worship in the exercises of religion, they are joyntly carefull to draw all the people to a publicke conformity. Which to effect, though it was a work of much difficulty, because of their strange matches, yet they conceived it to be a point of absolute necessity, as without which their State would suddenly come to ruine. This ye may observe in the words of our Text, where it is said in the 5 verse: That when *Ezra* opened the Booke in the sight of all the people, then all the people stood up. They were not allowed (it seemes) some to sit while the others stood, according as every mans fancy led him, *but all the people stood up*, saith the Text. As also ye may observe it further in that which followeth in the 6th verse, where it is said, that when *Ezra* praised the Lord, the great God, then all the people answered *Amen, Amen*: as with an unanimous consent, and with lifting up their hands: and they bowed themselves, and worshipped the Lord with their faces towards the ground. Here is a standing up all together at one time, a lifting up their hands all together at another time, and a worshipping of the Lord with their faces to the ground. in conclusion:

5 Point Let all things be done decently and in order, was S. Pauls rule, 1 Cor. 14. the last verse, as intimating that there is no decency without order, in any publicke actions, in any publicke society. The want whereof is the bane of the most hopefull undertakings, whether in peace or war, which, as oftentimes it is the decay of a State, so it is the ruine of an Army. *To him that ordereth his wayes aright, will I shew my salvation,* saith God, *Psal. 50.* the last verse, as intimating that all such shall fall short of the sight thereof, as delight to walke in the disorderly way. I wish that our factious singularists, whose queazy stomachs rise against all conformity, would take this into consideration. For my part, I freely professe my selfe a disciple to conformity, so long as I finde nothing against it in the sacred Scripture. And I shall ever desire to joyne in the practise of it, had I none other ground for it, but this in my Text: where I reade, that this people in the re-establishment of their State and religion, were studious of a publicke conformity in the worship of God, standing up all together, saying *Amen* with one voyce, lifting up their hands, bowing, worshipping, as

B 2

the

the publicke action and reading of *Ezra* gave occasion.

6 *Ob.* Yea, and (which is yet more remarkable in their proceedings in this kind) in making provision for the reading of the Law in publicke assemblies, they are careful to have all decent accommodations for the same. *Ezra* the Scribe hath a Pulpit of wood, prepared for the preaching; and in or upon this Pulpit, hee stood, saith my Text, and read the Law unto the people, *verse 4.* Which Pulpit was so ordered, that standing therein, he was above all the people, saith the Text, *verse 5.* to the intent, that his voyce might be the better heard, as our English glosse upon that place expounds it.

6 *Point* A most pious and commendable care without question, that in the publicke assemblies, all things might be done, not only decently and in order, but profitably also to the edification of the Auditory. Which last thing most plainly appeareth in the two last verses of my Text, where care is taken, that certaine selected Levites, whose names are exprest in the seventh verse, should cause the people to understand the Law. To which end an order was established

blished, that the Levites should reade in the Law of the Lord *distinctly*, without hudling up things together, as many doe now adayes: and not to content themselves with bare reading, but they should also give the Sence thereof, and cause the people to understand the reading, as you have it in the last words of my Text. And now, I pray you, what patterne can bee more plaine, what warrant more strong can the Scripture afford us for our order in our congregations, for decent carriage in publicke assemblies, for our reading Pewes, our Pulpits, our Sermons, our expositions of Scripture, after reading thereof, then this of this people in the words of our Text? wherein *Ezra* the Scribe standeth upon a Pulpit of wood prepared for the preaching, with the Nobility and Clergy on his right hand, and on his left, opening the Booke in the sight of the people, and reading the law unto them: at whose opening of the Booke, the people stand up, say *Amen*, bowing their heads, and worshipping. The Levites by exposition cause the people to understand the Law; reading it distinctly, and giving the sence: which when I thinke upon, I can not but breake into that patheticaall wish of

a reverend Divine of our owne upon an occasion not much unlike: *O si Deus hoc faceret nobis tam commodum, quam Ecclesia proposuit accommodum*: O that the Lord were pleased but so to perswade the hearts of men and women to an unity of affections in their publicke devotions, as the holy Ghost hath beene carefull to let us a patterne in Scripture, and the reformed Churches pious in propounding us an uniformity, And so I have done with the explication of the words of our Text; I now onely crave your patience for a word or two of application, and I will draw suddenly to a conclusion.

1 Our Text, you see, hath acquainted us with a people, that by a right use of affliction, are growne penitent and pious. A lesson for the Patients of this house and foundation, to chaike them out a way to the happy use of Gods corrections. That they may know that there is none other way so ready to remission of sinnes, as humiliation and contrition of heart for the same, wisely inured to piety in devotion.

2 It hath acquainted us with their practise of joyning the Church and State together in an unanimous consent for the honour

nour of God in his publicke service. To
lesson us in the necessity of a mutuall accord
this way, if we desire the prosperity of our
Jerusalem.

3 It hath acquainted us with their study
and practise of conformity in Gods services
that wee might know that our God is a
God of order, and that the Church of God
is truly represented by an Army well or-
dered, as being never so victorious over its
enemies, as when it is terrible unto them as
an Army with banners, *Canticles the 6.ch.
the 4 verse.*

4 It hath acquainted us with their ho-
ly practise in accommodating all things in
their publicke assembly, as to Gods glory,
so to the peoples edification. Not onely to
instruct us that such should bee the care of
all good men, but to shew us what wee
owe to God for the happy indeavours of
such religious spirits as are raised up by God
to performe such godly and christian
workes with a study for the publicke good.
The names of those noble Patriots, who
were sticklers in this reformation here in
my Text, both Clergy and Nobility are re-
corded to their everlasting honour, by the
penne of the holy Ghost. Wee may there-

fore by good warrant write up even in letters of gold, the names of such pious Patrons as God bleſſeth us withall in this depraved and degenerate age of ours. And with this holy confidence upon juſt grouuds, that theiſ names are written in the booke of eternall life, of whom GOD maketh choiſe to be moved by his holy Spirit, to workes of this nature in this mutuall life. Miſtake mee not I beſeech you: this is no place for flattery: we ſtand in the preſence of the Searcher of all our hearts. I doe undoubtedly aſſure my ſelte, that even they whoſe hands have beene deepeſt in the erection of this place, will be content to ſay as *David*, when hee had prepared all materials for the building of Gods Temple, *1 Chron. 29. 14.* *Lord, who am I? and what is my people, that wee ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? For, all things come of thee, and of thine owne have wee given thee.* God hath given the meanes, God hath filled the hand, God hath enlarged the heart to doe this pious act in this place, and to God onely be all the glory for it.

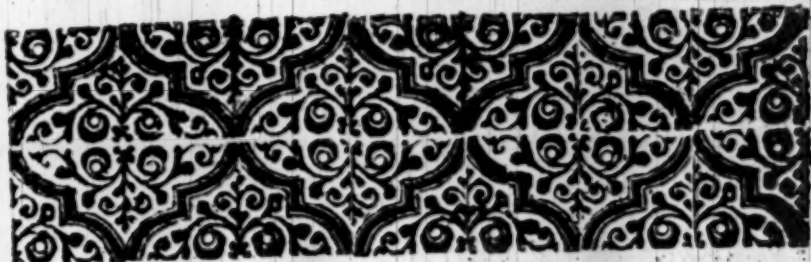
And now what remaineth, but an earneſt exhortation to a continuance in well-doing,

doing, and that a course may be taken for an happy progresse in Gods favour to the royall foundation of our Hospitall? And to this end as I propound this people in our Text your patterne, and thereupon shall be bold to make a request unto you; so I will conclude with an exhortation, and a prayer upon it. The request I ground upon the practise of this people, in whom wee finde unanimity for preservation of the publicke welfare, and the same in peace. And this request I deliver in the words of Saint Paul, *Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, verses.* If there be any if consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, any bowels of mercy, *verse 1.* fulfill my joy, (and not mine alone, but the joy of God, and of his holy Angels) by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one minde, *verse 2.* And let nothing be done through strife or vaine-glory: but in humbleness of minde, let each esteeme other better then himselfe, *verse 3.* And let us not looke every man to his owne things onely, but every man also to the things of another, *verse 4.* Let the same minde be in you that was in Christ Jesus, *verse 5.* This is the summe of my request. And now my prayer shall bee
for

for every member of this royall foundation;
 as wel Officers as Governours, none excep-
 ted, that we may be not onely like minded
 one towards another, according to Christ
 Iesus, as Saint *Paul* prayeth for his Romans,
Rom. 15. 5. but that wee may live and dye
 in unity, peace, and concord: and herein,
we beseech thee to heare us, good Lord. That
 so performing our duties to God, and to
 the poore committed to our charge in all
 sincerity and uprightnesse of hearts, when
 our generall account shall be called for, wee
 may be received with an *Eugee bone & fa-*
delis serve, well done good and faithfull ser-
 vant; *Math. 25. 21.* *Thou hast beene faith-*
full over a few things, I will make thee Ru-
ler over many things, enter into the joy of thy
Lord.

Vnto which joy, may hee be pleased to
 bring us, who hath most dearly bought
 us, even Iesus Christ the righteous,
 to whom, &c.

F I N I S.



Feb. 16. 1638.

Imprimatur.

Guil. Bray.

